

IS THE DRINK DEMON BECOMING

WOMAN'S DEADLIEST ENEMY?

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Noted Specialists
claim that
the Wine-Habit
is gaining
a Vice-like grip
on the
gentler sex
of the
Nation

Is wine conquering its worst enemy?
Are women wooing it as a pleasant habit and a harmless luxury?

From New York comes the statement that in the flotsam and jetsam, floating like an arabesque of horrors on the downward stream of excessive drink, women are found in greatly increasing numbers.

No less a man than Dr. John D. Quackenbos, eminent in the treatment of nervous and mental diseases, is authority for the declaration that throngs of women are giving away their nerves and brains as the fearful price for the elation that comes from champagne or the mental exaltation that lurks in the glass of absinthe.

To Washington, this assertion must be of compelling importance, not only because within the past year one of its best known ministers of the gospel has voiced a warning against the wine habit among women, but also because the Capital of the Nation is in the winter "season" the home of many of the leaders of society. And society comes in for its share of blame in Dr. Quackenbos's wholesale denunciation of woman's drinking.

Increased Tenfold.

He says, without the fear of contradiction, that where one man drank intoxicants ten years ago more than ten are addicted to the habit now.

But he goes still further. In a merciless phrase, he before the public his belief that drinking among women has to be a menace to the stability of American institutions, because it breaks down the body, shatters the nerves and unseats the reason. He sees in the habit

as practiced by women ruin for them and a curse for posterity.

He is like the shadow of death, standing in the cafes and restaurants, the boudoirs and hotels, pointing with relentless persistency to the handwriting on the wall, the warning that women, by welcoming wine, can do irreparable harm to America. He speaks

his lesson as he has learned it in the frankness of the professional closet, as he has seen it in the revelations of the twitching nerve and the wasted face; and as he has studied it in the wreck of homes and the waste of barren lives.

Knows Whereof He Speaks.

Many times there have been heard cries from various people

that the drink habit among women was on an alarming increase. These fears have been laughed away by the public. But now comes a man who knows whereof he speaks, who would invite attacks upon his professional standing if he treated the subject with exaggeration, and who does speak because of what has been told him by broken and wasted women who

came to him as a last resort and laid their woes at his feet.

Society women, to whose smiling lips the bubbles of champagne have risen from crystal shells, have told him their story. Actresses, who have learned to drink in Bohemian cafes where the lights were low and Hungarian bands filled the air with their strange, sensuous music, have added their testimony to that of the society women. Shop girls, who have come to grief through the coarser drinks, have made their marks on the record. Women, women, women—in the last ten years they have passed through his study, an unending procession in search of the means

to fight the ravages they have endured from drink.

Rich and Poor Alike.

He has treated the humble folk whose excessive drinking took away real comforts from their home, lovely women in whose hair dwelt a perfume soft as the breath of fairies, and they have told him how their woes were born in wine, and reared to unendurable limits in whisky.

What he says is important. He treats nervous and mental diseases by what he calls "auto-suggestion." That is, by mental treatment, he frees them of the desire for drink, and thus gives them the opportunity to shake off the habit. One condition of his taking a case is that the prospective patient shall be entirely frank with him, and tell him how she started to drink excessively, and all other details connected with her case.

What this frankness has taught him may be gathered from these statements in an interview he gave to the press in New York:

Wine, Cocktails, and Highballs.

"Especially alarming is the growth of the drink habit among women. I have treated women whose weekly bill for champagne alone was \$100, and who filled up the intervals between their draughts of vintage wine with cocktails and highballs.

"The punch-bowl figures at all

functions, and women dip freely therein, ten drinking today where one drank a dozen years ago. School misses and college girls are conspicuous among the throng. One New York clergyman recently instanced the case of a luncheon given in New York at which twenty-four debutantes drank thirty-six bottles of champagne, while fifteen of them smoked seven dozen cigarettes.

"Girls in their teens see no impropriety in drinking publicly with men companions. On this account the abstinent, unobtrusive young woman of the past generation is giving place to a girl of very different character.

"Some one has pointedly said that the moral interests of the nation are in the hands of women, and the only way by which women can lead them straight is to be straight themselves.

"Not a few of our school children also have become beer drinkers, especially those of foreign birth, and the increased prevalence of this habit is leading to a mental sluggishness, if not defeat, among the pupils of the public schools that is attracting the attention of educators and philanthropists.

Effect of Excesses.

"In short, the prevalent wholesale addiction to the use of alcoholic stimulants, with its accompanying degeneration of the kidneys, brain, heart, liver, stomach, and arteries; its pernicious influence in the causation of pneumonia and tuberculosis; its direct action in increasing the mortality rate in all diseases; the part it plays in the induction of insanity, one-third of all mental afflictions being due to its abuse; and its tendency to transmit to offspring not only epilepsy and mental defect, but marked degeneracy and criminal propensity—is assuming proportions so appalling that it may justly be regarded as perhaps the greatest existing menace to the stability of American institutions.

"The noticeable increase in the consumption of stimulants, especially among the upper classes, estimated at 10 per cent during the last decade in the case of men, and a much larger percentage in that of women, is inviting anxious attention to a means of treating the victims of alcoholic inebriety, for which so much has been claimed in this country and abroad.

"One billion five hundred million dollars are spent annually in the United States for intoxicating drinks, and another \$1,500,000,000 for the relief of the destitution, the punishment of crime, and the care of the physical and mental diseases that result directly from the drink habit.

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